27 W. 18th St.,
New York, Feb. 16, 1874.

My Dear Mrs. Chapman,

I have to thank you for your very encouraging letter received this morning. The task which I have very timidly undertaken is not to write a history of the great movement for the abolition of slavery, but simply to give my recollections of the events of the first few years, with a view ~~to setting forth~~ in a clear light the leadership of Garrison. It seems an almost unpardonable presumption for me to undertake a task which could only be fitly achieved by such a pen as your own or that of Edmund Quincy; but I

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hope to be pardoned, since more competent writers are silent, for attempting to make a humble contribution to the materials from which the history will some time be constructed. How far I may be drawn I cannot say, but probably I shall not proceed further than the first ten or twelve years. Even if I were competent to undertake a history, I have not the necessary documents at hand, nor yet time, amidst pressing engagements, for the work. My own library is very incomplete, and there is none in New York, that I know of, that is accessible to me. My numbers can appear, for the present at least, no faster than one a fortnight.

I am sadly disappointed that all my efforts to persuade Garrison to write, not a history of

the movement, such a series of auto-biographical sketches, have come to mind. Lucy might write the history. She is a writer of marvelous skill, and she understands both the facts and the philosophy of the movement. I wonder that his own ambition does not move him to the work. What a book he might make if he only would!

I am really afraid you will be disappointed in my sketches; but, having begun, I shall go on, for a time at least. If I find my labors awaken no response, I can stop them at any time. Thank you for the offer of the Lyceum pamphlet. If I need it, I will send to you for it.

I will order the Christian Union sent to you according to your request. If either or all of your

sisters are with you, pray assure them of my most cordial regards, and believe me

Yours, with the highest respect

Oliver Johnson.

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